

How to Spy

The Craft of Intelligence

By Allen Dulles

Wideness, Inc. 272 pages, 30s.

CPYRGHT

ADDRESSING a class of trainees for the Central Intelligence Agency recently, Mr Dulles listed as precepts for a good intelligence officer: "Be able to express your ideas clearly, briefly . . . and interestingly," and "Learn when to keep your mouth shut." In expounding the covert aspects of his craft, the former director of US Central Intelligence has obeyed both precepts. He writes fluently; and little in his description of American and Russian intelligence methods could not have been culled from the memoirs of ex-spies, or from the works of Ransom, de Gramont and Tully.

Within limits such reticence is laudable; Mr Dulles retired little more than two years ago. Nevertheless, "The Craft of Intelligence" has about it a disconcertingly elusive quality, as though its author either did not understand what CIA's critics were saying, or else had chosen wilfully to ignore or misconstrue their arguments. Mr Dulles is either remarkably ingenuous or remarkably disingenuous. Neither quality is reassuring in a man whose former office was once described by a senior senator as "perhaps second only to the Presidency in its importance."

Mr Dulles admits that CIA has been harmed by the widespread view that it "makes policy," but he dismisses this view as mythical. He maintains that the President and State Department alone set the lines of American policy. Formally he is right, but the way he poses the problem is misleading. While the President and State Department are of course formally responsible for determining policy, their decisions are largely based, as Mr Dulles himself admits, on intelligence estimates. How it is possible under these circumstances for the intelligence community not to become deeply involved in policy-making the writer does not explain.

To the suggestion that CIA officers in the field occasionally contravene official policy Mr Dulles returns an equally formal reply:

An American ambassador is the commanding officer and everyone stationed under him, including the CIA personnel, is responsible to him.

But disagreements between CIA and the

State Department led to high-level negotiations under Eisenhower; and in 1961 President Kennedy felt constrained to remind each American ambassador personally of his general responsibilities. On these episodes Mr Dulles is silent. He is silent, too, on the question of whether "special operations" of the Bay of Pigs type should be housed under the same roof as intelligence-gathering.

Predictably, he has more to say about CIA's apparent inability to distinguish between social democrats and Communists, and its tendency to support "hard line" politicians, however disreputable. Mr Dulles's remarks on this point deserve quotation in full:

Another myth is the charge that CIA always supports dictatorships. This too has been subtly suggested in all manner of ways by Moscow propaganda. Since CIA does not support Communists or fellow travellers, it must, in Moscow's view, support capitalistic warmongers, colonialists, *et al.* There is nothing in between. Ergo it must be the dictators who are supported.

The book contains many such passages. Whether they afford glimpses into the former CIA director's mental processes it is hard to know, since the book was evidently written for a popular American audience. What they certainly do is reduce greatly its value as a contribution to the literature of intelligence.